



Takitaki

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IN REMEMBRANCE OF SISTER SATYA BALI



Satya Bali

It's been one year since the passing away of Sr Satya Bali, the founder of Ba Senior Citizens Centre and a pillar of strength for FRIEND in its inception. This soft spoken, gentle and always smiling person dedicated her entire life to service. She served in many capacities around the country and was one of the first officers to start at the Department of Social Welfare in Ba. She was always busy with women from HART, the Methodist Church, Quota club, the Senior Citizens Centre and the community of Ba. If you observed her you found that the needy from Ba found their way to her for all sorts of assistance, and even though she had little from her pension as a retired nursing sister she never turned anyone away and never talked about who she helped and how.

Satya Bali deserves every recognition for her service to this nation and it is our duty to see that her legacy—the first community senior citizens centre for the elders in the country—continues and is strengthened. Her dream was to create a space where members of the community who contributed to nation building during their early years could continue with an active life physically, mentally and socially.

She will always be dearly missed by her loved ones.

WORLD FOOD DAY CELEBRATIONS

World Food Day was celebrated at FRIEND this year on the 16th of October. Members of the community took part in celebrations with the theme "Investing in the Future for Food Security". This year's theme highlighted the importance of developing agriculture in rural areas to ensure that there is enough food supply for future generations. Speakers from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health highlighted the importance of planting for oneself and how it would lead to healthy living. The Chief Guest, Mr. Rajend Singh, said that development in agriculture is much needed and the younger generation should be educated on its importance.

Competitions for the community members were organized in three categories: 1) Preservation, which highlighted the traditional techniques of preserving food, 2) Preparation of a well-balanced meal, which created awareness on how to utilize local food in a balanced diet and to reduce the consumption of processed food, and 3) Food Garnishing, which displayed the community members ideas on how to make their food appetizing, as well as adding to its nutritive value.

There were quite a few entries for the competition. It was good to see that local people are interested in learning and adapting to a healthy way of living and are keen on giving their support for development of the agricultural industry in the rural areas. To reduce the number of hungry people in the world, everyone's support and cooperation is needed. The theme for World Food Day this year is an important one and action on this has to be taken now to have a future which is poverty and hunger free.



THE VOICES OF THE NORTH



I grew up on the Island of Vanua Levu based in Labasa town. Vanua Levu is the second biggest island in Fiji. It consists of the three provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua & Macuata. With Taveuni, Rabi, and Kioa it makes up the Northern Division of Fiji.

I conducted needs assessments in Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Rabi to find out the issues of concern for the communities. Despite the fact the North contains about one third of Fiji's population, it has been largely neglected as far as infrastructure is concerned. This affects communities at all levels. Rural communities and areas outside of the towns and commercial areas of Savusavu and Labasa are the most affected.

The main source of income in the north comes from farming and fishing. In some villages the women are out fishing all day or diving for sea shells to sell at village shops or nearby markets for their basic needs. Some of these women go out to sea five times a week to be able to feed their families.

With great thanks to FRIEND, at present we are in the process of introducing the Income Generation Program in the North. This empowerment program will build capacity in the communities, as we work with them in using their resources and skills to generate income to support themselves and their loved ones.

In Solidarity,
Adi VasuLevu Chute

ANSHU'S STORY

Anshu Mala
Lautoka Kitchen Supervisor

Namaste. I am Anshu Mala and I come from Teidamu, which is located half way between Lautoka and Ba. I was educated up to Form 6 and got married at the age of 18. I have been a housewife for 11 years and now have the opportunity to work with FRIEND.

I came to know about FRIEND when I attended a presentation on the organization at Tuvu Primary School. I became interested in the Income Generating Program and dropped in to Sashi's office with a sample of papadams. My samples were approved in September last year. I then joined the FRIEND kitchen as a kitchen hand for Sweet Mango Chutney. After the mango season, I worked on Guava Jam and Star Apple Jam projects for which I was paid per piece. After my expenses, I was able to save enough money to start a bank account and pay for my family's land lease. Our land was reserved after our lease expired in 2001 and we paid the lease for our residential block. I have been able to learn a lot about quality control systems, Occupational Health and Safety and First Aid, which has been very handy knowledge to have. I enjoy working with FRIEND and interacting with a lot of people. I have become an independent person after starting work. Everyday rural women in the villages struggle to meet their needs. Many don't have access to water or electricity. They have skills but they don't know how to turn them into business. They don't have the resources or market. Rural woman need support for development and we are happy that there is an organization like FRIEND in the West.

NEW BOARD APPOINTED

Since its inception, FRIEND has, for the most part, been governed by its founding trustees, but we now have a new Board of Directors to assist guiding the organization to new heights. Officers of the Board are President, Dr Pramila Devi, Senior lecturer at USP Lautoka Campus and Vice President, Esala Nakalevu, Manager Fiji Pine Trust. Mr Philip Gock, the General Manager of Eddie Hin Ltd is the Treasurer and Satendra Kumar from Carpenters Finance is the Secretary. Mr John Shannon, Sales Manager for Hong Kong Door & Windows Ltd and Sufi Dean, Executive Director of Leadership Fiji are also serving on the Board. FRIEND is honored to have the services of people who come with a wealth of experience in management and development. It is expected that the Board will provide sustainability for the organization's future.

FIGHTING POVERTY, FIGHTING HUNGER

The "No Hunger Day" Team
preparing to distribute food.

Oct. 17th 2006, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, marked the end of the Month of Mobilization against poverty that was observed by civil society organizations all over the world. With the support of partners and the community, FRIEND staged a series of events throughout the month to raise public awareness and inspire people to get involved to end poverty. For the final event of the month, FRIEND worked with youths from

Youth United, Lautoka. To make a start toward ending hunger, these enthusiastic youths who have the passion to stand up against poverty volunteered to cook, pack and distribute food with cans of juice, ice cream and clothes to the needy, homeless, poor, neglected, and disadvantaged people who make the streets of Lautoka their home.

The event was organized in the hope that Fiji would recognize that people are going to bed without decent meals in this country. We all need to take action to keep Fiji, and the world, from avoid falling deeper into the clutches of poverty and hunger.

KUALA LUMPUR HOSTS EDUCATION ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

The Popular Communications for Education Campaigns and Advocacy Workshop held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was organized by Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBEA) in partnership with KOMAS, and South Eastern Asia for Popular Community Program (SEAPCP).

Participatory exercises involved participants in the workshop with songs, music, active and written activities. There was also interesting sharing and discussions of experiences and activities of education and advocacy at the organizational level. Education advocacy aims to bring about specific changes in processes, policy or practice in both developed and developing countries, to ensure the right to education. This right is vital to the achievements of development goals so that disadvantages are reduced.

Effective education advocacy is about finding the most appropriate ways of working on each issue and using the right tools. Video is a very powerful tool for education advocacy. It gives strong messages to children and communities. Audio evokes emotions, but choosing the right profile to create the right character, is important. Other approaches such as direct lobbying, constructive learning, policy research, public campaigning and popularization, media work, capacity building with disadvantaged people, budget monitoring and building networks, coalitions and alliances can also be effective. The program rounded up with group activities, creating action plans and evaluation. Participants left with a great deal of new knowledge to use in their work with communities.

